

have disappeared from the wild flora of the earth. No wild progenitors can be indicated with any certitude for maize, the millets, wheat, barley, rye, oats, beans, lentils, yams, sweet potatoes, and sugar cane. On the other hand, rice, cotton, potatoes, tobacco, and the various root-crops can be traced to plants that still occur in a wild state. When grain-yielding plants had been brought under control the advantage would be perceived of growing oilseeds to provide a relish in diet and a means of lighting; also of growing fibres, the usefulness of which was enormously increased by the invention of the loom as a substitute for finger-plaiting. If diversity of crops may be taken as an indication of antiquity, it was in sub-tropical Asia that agriculture achieved its first developments. The principal cereals of European agriculture are exotics : wheat and barley were originally Asiatic, and it was not until the Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries that cotton and sugar cane became known in the Mediterranean. Maize, potatoes, the haricot bean, and tobacco are heritages from the cultivators of Mexico and Peru. But Europe has specialities of its own—root crops, in particular, such as the turnip, the swede, and beet, which will not flourish outside the temperate zone.

In the development of mechanical art European civilization incomparably surpasses that of Asia. There is no such difference in regard to

agriculture.

The cultivation of Egypt of
Mesopotamia. China.
and India. reached a very high
standard of
excellence : plants were differentiated
into a vast
number of varieties—indeed over 700
kinds of
rice are grown in India : the value of
manuring
and of rotations was fully appreciated.
Modern
science has ascertained that
leguminous plants
through the agency of microbes
which form